1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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301 ments. The Sumu also carried the nails and teeth extracted from their unhappy victims (M. W.: 305). The seeds of the "lágrima
[824] de San Pedro" (*Coix lacryma-jobi* L.; M.: *twi ma;* S.: *am minik, am mak*) are still in great favor.

In modern times such necklaces are nearly always made from small colored glass beads (M.: *lilyura;* T., P.: *ala;* U.: *tasaŭka*) of foreign manufacture. Bead ornaments are also worn by both sexes around the wrist, at the ankle, and below the knee. On festive occasions the men also put "hatbands" of beadwork around their hats. The Sumu women seldom wear the beads worked in a pretty design, as do the men, but they put the whole "hank" around the neck, just as they buy them in the shops, fastening the ends at the back of the neck. Sometimes they wear such a large quantity of these beads as to hinder them considerably in following their daily occupation.

301 FEATHERWORK.—Feathers from certain bright-colored birds, as parrots, toucans, macaws, curassows, etc., are made into ornaments
287 by attaching them to a string or to a thin vine with the aid of thread from cotton or silk grass fiber. Such ornaments are comparatively rare now; they are seen chiefly at the festival of the dead. The art
232 of the "tapirage" (from a native name of the Guianas), or artificial means of obtaining yellow or red plumes from parrots or other birds, as is still done in South America, appears to have been known to the Sumu in former days. For this purpose they used the secretion from
● [825] the skin of a common greenish-blue frog (*Dendrobates tinctorius*) with black stripes and spots over the whole body, including the legs, which was rubbed into the skin of the parrot, the subsequently appearing young feathers being yellowish red instead of green.

301 PECTORAL PLATES.—M. W. (308) mentions a thin breastplate worn by the Miskito on festal occasions; it was made of a Spanish dollar piece beaten out flat. Columbus also mentions such gold ornaments which were worn around 1502 on the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica and Panama.

301 NOSE AND LIP ORNAMENTS.—The nasal septum was formerly per-
304 forated for the reception of a rod of bone or cane, an ornament which has now entirely disappeared. Dampier (I, 32) describes and depicts a curious cone or bell shaped ornament of turtle shell worn by the Kukra males of Corn Islands in the underlip. During early childhood the lip of the boy was pierced and the perforation kept open by means of little pegs. When arrived at the age of 14 or 15 (probably at the age of puberty) the boy inserted in the opening an ornament of tortoise shell, the under part of which was allowed to hang down over the chin; it was worn the whole day long, but it was taken out at night. About the latter part of the seventeenth century the Miskito wore on the chin a pendent plate of brass or shell, which was supported by a turtle-shell hook inserted in the lower lip (M. W.: 308).

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larger settlements of the country; they ignore the Indian languages, however, and their activities are practically limited to the Ladinos.

On the other hand, the Moravians (*Unitas Fratrum*), who came to the coast in 1849, have succeeded in evangelising most of the Miskito and some of the Sumu as well. They use both English and Miskito in church and school. The first effort by Protestants to introduce Christianity among these Indians is the one made by English Puritans, who in 1630, under the Earl of Warwick, took possession of the island of Providencia, situated off the Atlantic shore of Nicaragua. They opened up commercial relations with the Miskito of Cabo Gracias a Dios and maintained themselves in the island until 1641, when they were ejected by a Spanish fleet. In those days a number of the Indians traveled to Providencia, where they became familiar with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments (Sloane, a: I, p. LXXVIII).

SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS: OMENS, CHARMS, AMULETS, TALISMANS, ETC.

BAD OMENS.—Anything occurring out of the ordinary is considered a bad omen (M.: *yalwaia;* S.: *dilak*), and some calamity is believed to befall one or more of the persons present.

Should the hunter, for instance, miss the game an unusual number of times on a certain day, he considers this the sign or token that he will soon fall sick and perhaps even die.

If someone should quite involuntarily let the paddle drop in the water, this is accepted in the light of a token of something evil about to happen.

Should the dog act in a peculiar manner and run around barking all about the house, although investigations will show that there is nothing wrong anywhere, this is a bad omen and soon some one of the inmates will die.

The crowing of a hen is also taken for a bad augury. Ladinos and Creoles participate in this superstition, and they immediately catch the fowl in question and wring its neck.

BIRDS OF ILL OMEN.—There are a number of birds which cause disease and even death when being seen, either at any time or under certain circumstances only. They should particularly be avoided by the Indian when he is hunting or working in the bush on a Sunday, but this belief is undoubtedly traceable to Christian influence. The Indians refuse to eat the flesh or the eggs of certain melancholy birds, believing that by so doing they will go wailing through the bush like the lonely bird itself. They also refrain from killing certain birds believed to have a keeper or owner invisible to man, and who would revenge himself.

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Certain owls and the snake hawk (M.: *waka*, *waksma*; S.: *makowa*) are especially feared, and the mere sight of them is supposed to cause disease or death.

The goat sucker (*Caprimulgus* sp.), a very common bird, is also feared owing to its uncanny nocturnal habits, the swiftness and peculiarity of its flight, and its note, which breaks the silence of the night. In Costa Rica its bones, dried and ground to a fine powder, are used by the Indians as a charm against their enemies. The powdered bone is mixed with tobacco in a cigarette which when smoked causes certain death, according to the popular belief.

A large spotted nightbird (M.: *boa*, *ukwas*; S.: *yo*), which appears sometimes in the neighborhood of the settlements at daybreak, is likewise feared.

The note of a nightbird, resembling the Mexican cuckoo and known by the onomatopoetic names of *pikus* (M.) and *tiks* (S.), is supposed to give a flat denial to any assertion made at that moment. When heard immediately after some one has made a remark, it means that the person in question has told a lie, or that he is unable to perform what he intended to do. If the Indians are, for instance, discussing some project, as a journey, festival, hunting expedition, and the like, the cry of this bird will cause them to put it off. When the hunter hears its voice he returns home immediately, knowing that luck will be against him on that day. At the mahogany camp on Rio Camanan (Rio Coco) a young Sumu from Rio Patuca was discussing with some of his countrymen the route to be followed on his journey back home, his period of contract having expired, when suddenly a loud *pikus* was heard near by. The Indian immediately became alarmed and despondent, and it took some time to calm his fears.

SUPERSTITIONS REGARDING OTHER ANIMALS.—A small ugly species of croaking lizard, called "galley asp" by the Creoles (M.: *ahuk*; S.: *kuhuk*), is held to be very venomous. The Indians claim that after having bitten some one it will rush immediately to the nearest water; the person bitten must do the same, and whichever reaches the waterside first will survive (Bell, a: 265).

The numbadora snake (M.: *matsikas*) is said to be very savage at certain times of the year, when its bite may become fatal. Others claim that, if molested, it will pursue a person, twist round his body, and lash him with its tail; it especially attacks a woman *enciente*.

The boa snake is said to contain a little venom in its fangs, which it discharges in the early morning only; at that time of the day its bite is therefore considered fatal.

A small speckled tortoise (M.: *sunakrás*; S.: *pulan-kuwa*) is said to be very thoughtless, and to lose its way frequently, as it may be found occasionally on the hills, far away from the nearest stream.

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The Indians do not eat it, believing that by so doing they will become forgetful like the tortoise itself, and become lost in the bush or misplace things, and the like.

Strange animals are regarded as evil spirits and their appearance is a bad omen; the Indians do not dare to kill them. Heath, while stopping with his Miskito crew from Kiplapihni at an empty house at Burimak (middle Rio Coco), came across a strange bat, which event he relates as follows: "We saw clinging under the palm roof a small snow-white bat. Some felt sure that it would suck our blood in the night; so it was killed, but turned out to be a perfectly harmless creature with very beautiful fur. But now, as no one present had seen such a white bat before, some declared that its coming was a bad omen; others that it was sent by an evil spirit, or was even more likely itself to be an evil spirit; that the man who killed it would soon die of a pernicious fever, etc. It took some time to calm the fears of the women especially." (Heath, b: 377.)

CHARMS, AMULETS, TALISMANS.—Some of the ornaments are undoubtedly supposed to act as charms, amulets, or talismans, as they are worn chiefly by the women and children, who are especially exposed to the malicious influence of evil spirits. In fact the different works of art and modes of decoration, including ornaments, paint, mutilation, scarification, tattoo, etc., seem to have had originally a religious and magical significance rather than a desire to embellish the appearance. Red and black paint is still regarded a prophylactic against disease.

Charms are used for managing the opposite sex, as a cure for barrenness by women, in order to have a male child, and for luck in hunting and fishing. Jaguar teeth are carried as talismans for courage, strength, and to stimulate virility and excite venery.

Charms on fruit trees have the object of increasing their yield and keeping birds, animals, and even man from plundering them. In order to render fruit trees more productive the Miskito drive a nail in the side of the stem facing the west. When they make staffs for turtle spears they also prefer utilizing the west side of the stem of the pejivalle palm, believing that part of the trunk to be more durable and resistant.[75]

Celts or stone axes, which are occasionally dug up in the fields, are regarded as "thunderbolts," and were worn in former days as amulets for protection against lightning. They were also supposed to render the bearer brave and enduring. They are considered very efficacious in healing certain diseases, and the sukya makes use of them in practicing his rites of sorcery. On account of these proper-

[75] The Creoles, in making tea from the medicinal bark of certain trees, likewise prefer using the bark on the side facing the sunset.

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781 length the wand will reveal the truth; if not the string must be altered and the process repeated until it is in its right position. Questions relating to the present and future will then be answered by the aukya, correctly as he states, though I must confess that the queries I propounded were never replied to very successfully, but I was an unbeliever, and it is a notorious fact that spirits are put out of their calculations by the incredulous."

789 CONTROL OF RAIN AND WIND.—Rain and wind can, according to the Indians, be produced or stopped at will by human, animal, or spirit agency. Thus while paddling down Rio Plátano with a Miskito crew, I noticed clouds gathering windward and threatening rain. The captain of the boat, upon noticing them, motioned the rain with the right hand to pass on, with the following words: "Do not come here as we do not want to get wet now! We have no shirt nor trousers with us to change, and if you will wet us we will have to remain in the moist clothes the whole day long and suffer from the cold. Pass on to those indolent and good-for-nothing people on Rio Patuca; they are all at home now lying in their hammocks."

Bell (b: 157) relates a similar experience with the Miskito of Rio Prinsapolca: The Indians, hearing the rain coming by the noise in the distant bush, vainly tried to keep it off by blowing with their mouths and driving the breath away on either side of their faces. They also spoke to the rain, telling it of the uselessness of its coming to wet them, thus: "Pass on, pass on; we are all wet already. You need not come here; pass on to the head of the river. There is gunpowder and tinder lying uncovered on the rocks. A man is burning a plantation there; pass on quickly, lest another shower wet it before you."

Often when the Indians heard a shower coming they pushed their canoe quietly under the thick bush to hide until the rain had passed, and were much annoyed if any one talked or made any noise. The killing of a howling monkey was also believed to bring rain, as that animal belongs to the water spirit, who will be angry at such an act (Bell, b: 157).

While proceeding up Rio Coco from the port Cabo Gracias a Dios to the Miskito settlement of the same name, my two paddlers put up a small sail, and then kept on whistling in order to call the wind to help them in their work. When all their efforts were of no avail they became rather vexed and made some disobliging remarks about the "lazy wind" (*pass sriāwankira*).

821 ECLIPSES.—An eclipse of the moon is said by the Sumu to be caused by the jaguar devouring that heavenly body; their name in itself points to this belief (*wāliko nawa kasna, wāliko nawa kasya;* lit.: "the jaguar is eating the moon"). At a lunar eclipse, no matter at what time of the night it occurs, the Sumu get up immediately in order

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There are many ways practiced commonly by the obeah man to injure his own enemy or that of his client. He may send to the intended victim a "duppy" (evil spirit). Or he may work with buried "poison," that is to say, he buries in the vicinity of the house of his intended victim a package containing rags, feathers, bones, and the like, after which the latter will fall sick and eventually die. Again he may introduce poison in his food by means of a third person. The obeah man may attain the object in view, that is to set obeah on his enemy, by merely making a cross or some other mark on the house, canoe, or some tool of the latter, or by shaking hands with him. It is even claimed that some "strong" obeah men are able to direct poisonous snakes to the bed of the intended victim. Sometimes such a sorcerer brings about the desired effect, owing to the great credulity of the people, who are so afraid of him that they do not even dare to denounce him. 754

MARRIAGE AND SEXUAL LIFE

The Indian girl is sold by her parents for a gun or a head of cattle, but she is rarely forced to become the wife of a man whom she does not love. Before giving their daughter away in marriage the parents will satisfy themselves that the suitor is able to provide for his future wife and that he understands the manufacture of hunting and fishing implements. 583

Courtship.—The efficacy of certain drugs or herbs in stimulating virility, exciting venery, and in conquering the heart of a person of the opposite sex is believed in by these Indians, and by many Ladinos and Creoles as well. By allowing a few drops of such a "love medicine" (M.: *yamni kâlkaya aska;* T.: *yamni talnin panambas;* U.: *yamka talnaka dikabasta*) to fall on the clothes, handkerchief, head, or body of a person, the affection of the latter may be obtained. Other herbs used in a similar manner will produce the opposite effect; such an infusion (M.: *miskera kâlkaya aska;* T.: *ba talnin panambas;* P.: *ma istkni talnin panambas;* U.: *di datka talnaka dikabasta*) is used to separate lovers who will thenceforth have a profound repugnance toward each other. Certain old people are supposed to be able to prepare very efficacious remedies of this kind, which they will sell for as much as $5. Should, however, the secret of the preparation be communicated, the charge will be about five times higher. A preparation of the Spanish fly or blister beetle, of which two varieties exist, a small brown one and a larger one which is black with longitudinal yellow bars, is believed also by some to act as a love potion; others again say that it will produce craziness. In reality this insect is a poison, but may be used in medicine as a diuretic and vesicatory. The Ladinos believe that practically all the Indians and Creoles of 832 [125] [278]

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This obstacle overcome, the soul finally makes its entry into *Obul*, the land of plenty.[80]

THE FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD

The festival of the dead (M.: *sikro, sikkro;* S.: *sĕñ*) is the most important of the bacchanalian orgies of these two tribes. Its real significance appears to be unknown to the large majority of the present-day Indians; it is certain, however, that it has some connection with the journey of the souls of the deceased to the hereafter.

THE SIKRO OF THE MISKITO.—To most Miskito the *sikro* of to-day is only an occasion for merrymaking and getting drunk. Originally only one *sikro* was made for each deceased person, but nowadays the Indians repeat this feast several times in order to have an excuse for a drinking bout. The custom can still be observed among the "heathen" Miskito of the upper Rio Coco and of Honduras. In the remaining districts of the Mosquito Coast nearly all the Indians belonging to this tribe have been converted to Christianity.

The *sikro* takes place about a year after a death, or rather as soon as the field of sweet cassava, planted especially for this purpose, has come into maturity. Although the Miskito make a great variety of intoxicating drinks (*miska*), the one consumed on such an occasion is invariably prepared from cassava. The fermented root of this plant is generally kept in casks obtained from the foreign merchants, but in former days the drink was left to ferment in large homemade earthenware vessels (*sussi*). The expenses of the feast are borne by the relatives of the deceased, who will butcher one or two head of cattle for this purpose, but all the neighbors lend a hand at the preparation of food and drink, and they even help at the planting and reaping of the cassava.

All the men and many of the women from the neighboring settlements are expected to come, and they begin to arrive, dressed in their best attire, about sundown on the specified day. The festival lasts until all the food and drink has been consumed, that is, two or three days. The women keep apart by themselves, and do not mingle with the men, except in order to pass the calabashes of drink around from one of the guests to the other. Occasionally both sexes

[80] The Sumu never kill any of the various creatures which they will have to meet on their final journey. When they deprive a toad of its skin for the making of a drumhead, they do not kill this amphibian, but release it again afterwards, and give it a few berries from a certain tree as a payment for its skin. The parents also admonish their children not to ill-treat animals, especially such as may be useful to them on the voyage to the hereafter. Similar conceptions are met with among primitive Indian tribes in various parts of the Americas who have had little or no intercourse with Christians.

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MISCELLANEOUS BELIEFS REGARDING FICTITIOUS BEINGS SAID TO INHABIT THE FOREST AND THE WATER

Living in dark and gloomy forests, the limits of which are unknown to them, the ideas of the Indians naturally turn toward the mysterious and wonderful, and they people in their imagination the unexplored regions of the country with fabulous monsters, or *unta dukya* as the Miskito call them generally.

DWARFS.—In certain parts of the forest may be found some dwarfs (M.: *sudta, alwuk-sirpi;* S.: *sasá mólkni, asuá mólkn*) of the size of children, but they are considered entirely harmless, and an encounter with one of them is even held to bring good luck.

WANDERING JEW.—The belief of the existence of a wandering human being, the *tawisti sari-ka* or *sawa-sari*, so named by the Paya, has also spread to the neighboring Twahka, who have translated the name into *tik-suba*, but it is unknown to the other tribes; the Miskito of Rio Patuca, however, appear to call this mysterious being *tiamila*. This man continually travels through the world with one of his hands placed in a cooking pot from which he is unable to extricate it. From time to time he beats with the pot against the trees, thereby producing a deep thunderlike noise, in order to break the vessel and liberate himself, but all his efforts are in vain. When he still was a boy, he was in the habit of eating the best part of the food before mealtime, leaving only the cassava and bananas for the other members of the family. His parents frequently scolded him for doing that, but he would not listen to them. One day the cooking pot closed up at the very moment he had his hand inside, and he was unable to withdraw it. Since that time he travels continuously through the bush like the Wandering Jew.

PECCARY OWNER.—The peccaries, especially the variety called warree, are said to have a keeper or owner (M.: *wari dauan;* T., P.: *sisi dauiaua;* U.: *sawi dalawasa*), who inhabits the caves of the interior, and occasionally retreats thereto with all the animals under his custody. In former times he is said to have been visible sometimes, accompanied by a drove of very fierce, large, white warrees. In order to guide his animals to a good feeding ground, he places with each herd a pet bird (M.: *wari yula;* T., P.: *sisi turukma;* U.: *sawi turukma;* these words literally mean "companion of the warree"). This bird, which may generally be found around a drove of peccaries, feeds probably on the ticks or other parasitic insects living on these animals. The Indians do not dare to kill it, as by such an act they would incur the wrath of the peccary owner. Some details pertaining

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776 825 to this fictitious being are given by Bell (b: 221–224). I submit herewith a Sumu story dealing with the peccary owner, which I propose naming:

THE ADVENTURES OF THE PECCARY HUNTER

539 A Sumu went out to the bush to hunt the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu* sp.). Suddenly he came upon a drove of a white variety, called *sdkakaya*, with very long tails and tusks. All of them were very fat. Our Indian had never seen a specimen of this variety before, but he had heard of its existence from the older people, who had, however, never succeeded in killing one.

He stalked upon them, but at the very moment he got his bow and arrow ready to shoot the whole drove made off at great speed. He followed their trails, determined not to go home without one of them. After a while he caught up with them, and saw them feeding on the fruits of the hog plum tree (*Spondias lutea* L.), but again they made off all together when he was at the point of sending an arrow at them. This was repeated again and again, and our Indian was unable to make use of his arrows. Still he kept on following them.

Suddenly he saw the whole drove disappearing into a cave. He followed, although it was pitch dark inside, for he could smell and hear them. After a while he came to a wall of solid rock which blocked his passage. He then made a small incision under his tongue and applied a little blood crosswise upon the rocks. Immediately the latter receded and he was able to proceed. Again he could hear and smell the peccaries in front of him. This was repeated several times.

Finally the Indian saw a streak of light ahead of him and directly he found himself outside the cave in a strange country, which abounded in the various varieties of peccaries. The large white kind, the *sdkakaya*, must have been the favorite food of the inhabitants, for in every house they were preparing a specimen for the table. The people were not friendly toward our Sumu, and they resented his having come to their land. He explained to them how it all happened, and that he was anxious to secure some meat for his wife and children. They told him then that they were the owners of all the peccaries, and that occasionally they sent some droves to the Sumu country, so as to enable the inhabitants there to have some meat to eat occasionally. But the white peccary (*sdkakaya*), they proceeded, "is for our exclusive use and for that reason the Sumu have never been able to shoot any of them." The people fed our Sumu and gave him a whole white peccary to take back home to his family. But they warned him not to mention anything about his adventure, as that would cause his immediate death. Then he was told to close his eyes, and some one took him by the hand and led him away. After

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a little while, feeling himself alone, he opened his eyes, and looking around, he found himself only a few steps from his own house. 539

Upon getting home, his wife wanted to know where he had been so long. He refused to tell the truth for fear of the revenge of the people from the peccary country, and told her that he had been lost in the bush. But she noticed that he was hiding the truth and kept on insisting that something extraordinary must have happened for his having succeeded in killing a *sŭnakaya*.

Finally he agreed to tell. He sat in his hammock, while all the neighbors surrounded him to hear the details of his strange adventure, and then he proceeded to narrate everything that had happened to him since he left home. But the moment he finished his story he died.

WITCHES.—Certain people of either sex are supposed to be greatly addicted to witchcraft, and to be able to transform themselves at will into owls or "lechuzas" (M.: *imi yula* or *kimi yula;* S.: *yala mŏih*[a]). 754

Some bad people transform themselves into a smaller species of owl (T.: *yarak;* U.: *sŏk*) and in their zoömorphic form introduce themselves during the night into the huts of their enemies, when the latter are asleep, in order to carry off the small children. The Miskito do not participate in this belief.

CYCLOPS.—In the bush lives also a curious being, shaped somewhat like a giant human being, but having a head similar to that of a dog. It has only one eye, while its large mouth is at the navel. 776

WATER NYMPH.—The mermaid or water nymph (M.: *liwa;* T., P.: *wan mallasi;* U.: *wan sirŏk*) is an evil water animal, which occasionally causes snags and strong ripples where the water otherwise is very smooth. It drives the fish away so that the Indian can not catch anything, and it incites the alligator to attack the canoes and upset them. It also assumes the shape of a beautiful woman and walks on land to entice the young men down to the waterside, when suddenly it pushes its victim into the water and devours it. Its head is that of a human being, but the body resembles that of a fish. This monster is also said to inhabit the sea, where it occasions waterspouts and hurricanes; the Miskito living at the coast call it also *kaha wlaaba* "sea spirit."

WAIWEN OR WAIWAN.—This name is applied by Miskito, Sumu, Rama, and Creoles to a black, doglike bush animal, with a nose shaped like that of the large anteater and with fiery eyes similar to balls of fire. It corresponds approximately to the "cadejo" of the Ladinos. Its claws rattle on the ground as it runs along with great swiftness. It spits fire and does not do any harm if left unmolested, but will throw down on the ground any one trying to stop it. There 825

[a] Lit., "people of the stars."

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825 is also said to exist a white variety. Bell (a: 254) describes it as a terrible monster, like a horse, but with "jaws fenced round with horrid teeth," whose native place is the sea, whence it issues from time to time to its summer residence on the hills, and at night roams about the forest in search of human and other prey.

ANTHROPOID APE.—On the unexplored mountain tops is said to be found a tailless anthropoid ape (*ulak*, *uluk*), reminding of the gorilla, orang-outang, or chimpanzee of the Old World. It is of erect position, about 5 feet in height, covered with black hair, and has the teeth turned backward. It is greatly feared, as it is supposed to carry off human beings of the opposite sex. This belief is also found among the other populations of the Mosquito Coast; the Rama and the Creoles call this ape *yohó* or *yuhó*, while the Paya and Ladinos apply to it the Spanish-Mexican name *sisimite* or *chichimite*.[92] Some Indians claim that this mysterious being has been seen several times during the last 20 years around the Guarunta Mountains, which extend northward of the lower Rio Coco. C. Acuña refers to men from South America with their feet turned backward. (Relation of the Great River Amazon. London, 1698, p. 158.)

KASWAKI, WAKUMBAI.—There is a wasp-eating bird, traveling in flocks, which is greatly feared by the Indians. It gives out an unearthly cry, somewhat like a hoarse human voice, and is known by the onomatopoeic names of *cacao* (Spanish), *katûhkatû* (M.), *kutû* (T.), and *katûhki* (U.). The Miskito also call it *pnamaka yula* "companion of the Panamaka," while the Creoles have given it the name *buckra guam* "white man's guan."

The Indians do not dare to kill this bird, as that would bring about the sudden appearance of a bluish, horse-shaped ghost (M.: *kaswaki*; S.: *wakumbû*[93]); the latter has a single leg in front and two behind, and travels through the air mounted by its owner. The simple sight of this supernatural being is supposed to cause death.

LUMPAÏLI (M.), TIGNINI (S.).—This is a long quadruped of short stature, somewhat resembling a weasel, of a pretty black color, but with spotted head. It does not harm any human being, but is greatly feared by all animals, large and small. It chases especially

[92] Regarding the alleged discovery of an anthropoid ape on the borderland between Colombia and Venezuela see Georges Montandon, Découverte d'un singe d'apparence anthropoide en Amérique du Sud, in Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris, Paris, 1929, fasc. I, pp. 183–195, and fasc. II, pp. 411–412.

[93] This name appears to be phonetically related to the word *akamboda*, by which term the Island Carib, in the language of the males, called the spirit of a person (C. de Rochefort, Histoire naturelle et morale des Iles Antilles de l'Amérique, Rotterdam, 1665, p. 471).

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larger beasts, like the jaguar and the puma, and kills them by introducing itself into their stomach.

WATER TIGER.—The water tiger (M.: *li lamya;* S.: *was nawa*) is supposed to be a manateelike animal, but covered with otterlike, glossy hair and a mane. Different species are said to exist, which have the same variety of color as the various species of Felis, the black variety being, however, the most common. This beast has webbed feet and walks awkwardly on land, but it is very swift in the water. It is found chiefly in the larger rivers among the rocks, and will devour any one swimming in the neighborhood or falling into the water; domestic animals and even men are said to have occasionally fallen victim to it. The Indians claim to have shot at it, but never succeeded in killing a specimen.

GIGANTIC BOA CONSTRICTOR.—A very large waula or boa constrictor (M.: *wûla tara;* T.: *wûla;* U.: *wayil*) with two horns on the head like a deer [6] is said to inhabit certain large lagoons in the pine ridges, far away from the nearest Indian village. It is claimed that the common waula or boa turns into such a monster when it reaches old age, and that it then retreats into deep lagoons. Man has no power to kill such a boa constrictor, as bullets have no effect on it; it can be destroyed only by a stroke of lightning.

The creeks leading to the lagoons inhabited by the monster are generally rich in all sorts of game, for no one dares to ascend them. It is claimed that in case anyone should be foolhardy enough to paddle up such a creek, presently a rumbling of thunder is heard; then the water reverses its course, flowing at a tremendous speed back to the lagoon directly into the mouth of the boa constrictor, which swallows the canoe with the intruder. The boat-bill heron (M.: *ukuku;* S.: *awakia*), a most uncanny night bird, is said to be found at the mouth of such creeks in order to warn off intruders.

FABLES OR TALES DEALING WITH BEASTS AND BIRDS

The Miskito know a great number of tales in which animals and birds act, think, and talk like human beings; they are supposed to possess spirits and to live, eat, drink, love, hate, and die just like the Indians.

These fables remind somewhat of the adventures of Ananси—a sort of god or culture hero—of the Gold Coast; or, Turtle of the Slave Coast; or, Hare (the Brer Rabbit of the United States Negroes) among the Bantu. Heath (a: 52) has drawn attention to the re-

[6] For this reason the Ladinos call it "masacuata" (from the Mexican *masatl* "deer" and *coatl* "serpent").